

Marsh Terns on the Nullabor Plain.—With reference to the note by Mr. L. Glauert in the last issue (No. 7, p. 152) on the unusual occurrence of the Marsh Tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*) at Forrest in the Nullabor Plain, I would like to place on record my observation of the same species at Cook, further east on the plain, on January 29, 1947. Very heavy floods had washed out the railway line in that vicinity a few days before and there was a very large expanse of water on either side of the line at Cook, on the edge of the township, and my train was the first or second to get through after the line had been repaired. A mishap to the train compelled it to wait at Cook for three hours and this enabled me to examine the bird life. There were about two or three Marsh Terns present and they had black on the abdomen. Other birds present were several White-headed Stilts, a duck and Red-capped Dotterels.

—M. J. SEYFORTH. Claremont.

A Record of the Scarlet-chested Parrot.—It will be of interest to ornithologists to place on record a recent observation of the Scarlet-chested Parrot (*Neophema splendida*) which according to Serventy and Whittell's *Handbook of the Birds of Western Australia* (1948) has not been reported in this State for many years.

In October, 1948 Mr. Harry Eldridge and I watched these birds on several occasions. The locality was just off the Lakewood Woodline, not far from the Main Camp, about 100 miles south of Kalgoorlie and 32 miles from Norseman. The place is known as Roe's Dam and is shown on some survey maps just east of the central portion of Lake Cowan. It is a large granite outcrop surrounded by open forest of Dundas blackbutt, salmon gum and gimlet, with denser thickets of jam and gimlet. On the ridge itself there are a number of sheoaks. It was on one of these that we first observed two males and a female from a distance of about 10 feet. They remained quite still for a period of about five minutes and did not appear to be shy. It was the startling beauty of the male which first attracted us and we were able from that distance to observe their markings minutely. On return to camp that evening we identified the bird from Cayley and also from Leach, and the *Handbook* description, since available to us, tallies almost exactly with our observation, except that I would not say that the back was *bright* green. It was definitely green and the green extended almost to the top of the head at the back, but it is the adjective "bright" at which I cavil.

We saw these birds on a number of occasions after that, and on one visit in October saw one bird enter a hollow limb as if nesting. Unfortunately the tree was a dead one and therefore unsafe and the limb was right at the top, about forty feet up, so that we were unable to investigate. They remained in this locality for as long as we visited it, and may still be there, since

I have not been back, except for a brief visit, for a couple of months.

-L. R. M. HUNTER, Government School, Main Camp, Lakewood.

Two Unusually Large Clutches of Blue-billed Duck's Eggs.—As the Blue-billed Duck (*Oxyura australis*) seldom lays a clutch of more than 5 or 6 eggs, it is interesting to report nests containing 9 and 10 eggs respectively, at Butler's Swamp, Claremont.

The first nest, which contained 10 eggs, was found on October 24, 1948. The nest was deep cup shape in form and was constructed entirely of reeds. It was attached to the reeds in about three feet of water. The nest was totally unlined with the exception of three breast feathers. The birds had constructed a canopy of reeds over the nest.

Nine of the ten eggs were nest-stained and were a dirty-white colour, rough and not glossy. The non-stained egg, which had been just laid, was light blue in colour. One typical egg measured 67.7 by 50 mm. During the day the birds had visited the nest several times and had rearranged the position of the eggs. Several times I disturbed the duck on the nest, and the bird dived off and swam away under water. Unfortunately the nest did not last long, for two weeks later when I next visited the nest the eggs were smashed and the nest destroyed.

The second nest was found on November 21, 1948. This contained nine eggs. However, of these nine eggs eight of them were Blue-billed Duck's eggs and the ninth was that of another species. It was smaller in size (57 by 40 mm.), greasy and with a decided gloss and creamy in colour; it had evidently been laid by a Black Duck (*Anas poecilorhyncha*). On the next visit to the swamp it was found that the Black Duck's egg and a Blue-billed Duck's egg had been taken, probably by one of the many schoolboy egg collectors who visit the swamp. But on a third visit to this nest on November 25, I found that the Blue-billed Duck had laid another two eggs to make nine altogether.

This nest was also unlined and like the other one it was constructed entirely of reeds. It was built under a clump of overhanging reeds and was very rough in structure. This nest was about 100 yards from the former nest and was possibly built by the same bird after its first nest was destroyed.

Ten is the largest number of eggs recorded for the Blue-billed Duck, but the cases I have reported may quite well have been combination clutches.

—M. J. SEYFORTH, Claremont.

CORRECTION

In No. 6, September 13, 1948, p. 117, line 32, for "weeks" read "days."